

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

JULY 2003



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Seasonal Job Losses Increase Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Northwest Wisconsin jumped half a percentage point from May to June. Even with the increase the rate remains below the rate set one year ago and is below the national unadjusted rate. The June unemployment rate in the northwest region was 5.9 percent, up from 5.4 percent in May, but lower than the 6.1 percent unemployment rate in June 2002. Nine of the ten counties in the Northwest Wisconsin region were among the 65 counties statewide that reported an increase in unemployment rate during the month.

Not seasonally adjusted the State of Wisconsin unemployment rate rose from 5.1 to 5.7 percent while the national rate increased from 5.8 to 6.5 percent. The current rates in both the state and the nation are higher than in June 2002. Seasonally adjusted the June unemployment rate for the state was 5.6 percent while the national rate was 6.4 percent.

Unemployment rates typically rise from May to June – 65 counties reported an increase this month – but the increase in the northwest region this year was larger than in recent years. Typically in June the un-

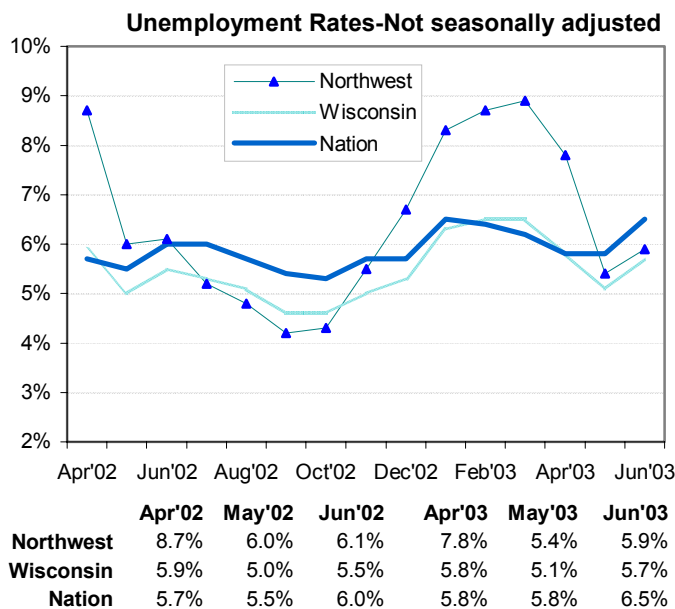
employment rate rises as reductions in employment occur in both state and local education. The job cuts are the result of workers without twelve-month contracts being laid off for the summer break.

The number of unemployed in the region also increased in June as job seekers continued to enter the labor force looking for summer jobs. Many of those summer job seekers were hired as local employers, especially those in tourist-related businesses, filled vacancies.

Total employment in the ten-county region did increase by 2,700 from May to June, which is near normal activity for the month. There were 93,250 employed and 5,900 unemployed in a total labor force of 99,150. In other words, roughly 94 percent of the labor force was employed in June.

Burnett County had the lowest unemployment rate, and the highest share of employed, in the region. The 4.4 percent

unemployment rate was also the ninth lowest rate in the state. In Burnett County the greatest increase in jobs was in the leisure and hospitality industry as employers added workers for the busy summer months.



Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin counties: Current month - June 2003

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02
Civilian labor force	9,337	8,748	9,054	8,254	7,846	7,904	8,411	8,245	8,100	23,693	23,148	23,365	3,458	3,293	3,508
Employed	8,545	8,123	8,161	7,813	7,427	7,462	8,039	7,900	7,733	22,323	21,986	21,978	3,176	3,010	3,251
Unemployed	792	625	893	441	419	442	372	345	367	1,370	1,162	1,387	282	283	257
% unemployed	8.5	7.1	9.9	5.3	5.3	5.6	4.4	4.2	4.5	5.8	5.0	5.9	8.2	8.6	7.3

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02
Civilian labor force	7,638	7,352	7,109	7,207	7,165	7,072	11,176	10,461	11,279	11,314	11,099	10,543	8,662	8,318	8,359
Employed	7,200	6,963	6,709	6,744	6,794	6,575	10,593	9,943	10,705	10,682	10,485	10,027	8,137	7,880	7,866
Unemployed	438	389	400	463	371	497	583	518	574	632	614	516	525	438	493
% unemployed	5.7	5.3	5.6	6.4	5.2	7.0	5.2	5.0	5.1	5.6	5.5	4.9	6.1	5.3	5.9

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - June 2003

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02
Total Nonfarm	9.3	9.2	9.2	4.5	4.2	4.3	5.4	5.4	5.3	18.7	18.8	18.2	2.3	2.3	2.5
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	1.2	1.1	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	0.4	0.4	0.4
Trade	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7	3.2	3.2	3.2	0.4	0.3	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	0.0	0.1	0.0
Financial Activities	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.9	1.9	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.2	0.7	0.7	0.6	2.5	2.4	2.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	3.4	3.4	3.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	2.3	2.3	2.1	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.4	3.1	3.3	3.0	0.4	0.4	0.4

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02	Jun '03	May '03	Jun '02
Total Nonfarm	7.0	6.8	6.6	6.0	6.1	5.9	7.5	7.1	7.7	9.4	9.3	9.0	6.4	6.3	6.3
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.1	2.1	2.2	0.6	0.5	0.6	2.8	2.8	2.9	1.1	1.1	1.1
Trade	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.0	0.9	1.0
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.8
Leisure & Hospitality	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	1.4	1.2	1.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.8
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total Government	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.2	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.1	1.1	0.9	1.5	1.5	1.5

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2002 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

Employers in Sawyer County in leisure and hospitality also added nearly 220 jobs, the largest increase in the region while hospitality employers in Bayfield County added over 200 jobs. The unemployment rate in Sawyer County did increase in June from 5.0 to 5.2 percent, but the increase was among the smallest in the state. The unemployment rate in Bayfield County, however, did not change from May to June, the only county in the state that showed no change. In June, the unemployment rate in Bayfield County was 5.3 percent.

Only six counties in the state had unemployment rates that declined during the month including Iron County. Even though the rate dropped from 8.2 to 8.6 percent in Iron County it was the ninth highest rate in the state. Ashland County reported a higher rate, however, with 8.5 percent unemployed and was among the fifteen counties in the state where the unemployment rate increased by more than one percentage point. Rusk County, where the unemployment rate rose from 5.2 to 6.4 percent, was also included in that group. In spite of the spike in rates both counties reported lower unemployment this June compared with one year ago.

In general the counties with higher tourism employment were better able to absorb the reductions

from education. Throughout the region leisure and hospitality employers added over 800 jobs in June, half of which were in Bayfield and Sawyer counties.

Throughout Wisconsin manufacturing employment continues to stall overall job growth and to some degree that is also true in Northwest Wisconsin. But production job losses were never as severe in this region as they were in the rest of the state because so many of the region's production jobs are in lumber and wood manufacturing. The demand for many wood products, especially in construction materials, never dropped in the same way that the demand for industrial equipment did. In June, manufacturing employers added another 250 jobs on top of the 175 jobs that were added last month.

With workers returning to jobs the number of claims filed for unemployment compensation benefits has been declining and has been below the level of last year in each week since the end of March. For the week that ended June 14 there were 2,423 claims filed for benefits in 2003 compared with 2,977 for the same week in 2002. That number increases, however, by mid-July to 2,733 residents filing claims. Adding to the number are recently laid off workers from Fleming Companies in Douglas County.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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